

***Chaenactis thompsonii*** Cronquist

Thompson's chaenactis  
Asteraceae (Aster Family)

**Status:** State Sensitive

**Rank:** G2G3S2S3

**General Description:** Perennial, top of root branched and with many stems, 4-12 in. (1-3 dm) tall; the leaves are all attached to the stem, pinnately lobed with a broad midrib, about 2 in. (5 cm) long and covered with fine wooly hairs; flowering heads few or solitary on each stem, flowers pink or whitish, anthers shaped like an arrow head, style bracts externally hairy; seeds club shaped and somewhat compressed.

**Identification Tips:** *Chaenactis thompsonii* is most closely related to *C. ramosa*. These species can be distinguished by their growth pattern and leaves. *C. thompsonii* is a perennial from a taproot, has a short, thickened, woody stem near the base, and has flat leaves. *C. ramosa* is a biennial or short-lived perennial with a taproot, and its leaf segments are somewhat curled.

**Phenology:** Flowering occurs beginning in June and continues through August.

**Range:** A local endemic, this species primarily is found in the Wenatchee Mountains of Chelan and Kittitas counties. Additionally, two occurrence are known from elsewhere in Washington.

**Habitat:** The species grows on dry rocky slopes and ridges at elevations ranging from about 4900-8000 ft (1500-2150 m) in serpentine soils. Inhabited sites in Washington include moderate to steep slopes of various aspects. Vegetation is generally sparse and xerophytic (preferring dry sites). Associated species include grasses (*Poa* spp. and *Agropyron* spp.), buckwheat (*Erigonum* spp.), and lupine (*Lupinus* spp.).

**Ecology:** This species grows almost exclusively on high-magnesium, low-calcium substrates of serpentine and peridotite. This species is a strong indicator of serpentine substrates in the Wenatchee Mountains. The flowers of this plant are not specialized. It is pollinated by a variety of medium- to long-tongued insects, such as bumblebees, solitary bees, and butterflies.

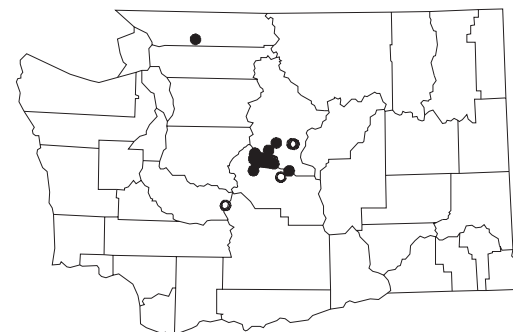
***Chaenactis thompsonii***

Thompson's chaenactis



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Illustration by John Rumley

Known distribution of  
*Chaenactis thompsonii*  
in Washington



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**State Status Comments:** This species is known from nearly a dozen recent sightings. The limited range, restricted habitat, and low total numbers of plants account for the sensitive status of this species.

**Inventory Needs:** Further investigation is needed to determine a critical habitat area in the Wenatchee Mountains. Sites from which the taxon has been reported should be examined to determine population trends and threats to survival. If historical sites could be relocated, protection of these sites would be desirable.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** Plant collecting, road building and mining could potentially threaten this species.

**Comments:** 'Chaenactis' is from the Greek 'chaino', meaning to gape and 'actis', meaning ray. These refer to the large flower opening and irregular ray flowers of some species. 'Thompsonii' is named for the 20<sup>th</sup> century Pacific Northwest plant collector J.W. Thompson.

### **References:**

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1955.  
*Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest Part 5: Compositae.*  
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